

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to Live with Trials

James 1:1-4 & 12

¹ Abraham woke up one morning to the voice of God Who said, *Abraham . . . I want you to take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains . . .*¹

Talk about a trial! Abraham dutifully obeyed God: collected the wood and the donkey, started off on a journey of several days with his son, prepared the altar, grabbed and tied his son to it, and began to kill him with his knife. At the last-minute God prevented the incident from being completed and provided a ram for the offering. Whew!

Abraham's faith was rewarded but at what cost? Besides having personal grief; so much for further father/son bonding. What about his relationship with Sarah and the rest of his family? That was definitely a trial!

Our passage of scripture today answers some questions you might ask about the trials you have. ²

¹ Genesis 22:2.

From James, chapter 1, verses 1 through 4 and verse 12, **James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything . . . Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.** ³

The first obvious question is . . .

I. What's a Trial? - v2

The word **trial** in the original language ² ₄ means an experiment, a testing.

We know that a mother bird, at the right time, will push its baby right out of the nest. As the baby

² πειρασμοις.

tumbles out, he instinctively spreads his wings and begins to fly. I'm sure it's a traumatic event for both the mom and the baby. But that's how baby birds learn to fly! ⁵

It's a test directed towards an end. Usually its purpose is to help you end up stronger and purer in your faith.

It is often a temptation and is often translated as such. ⁶ Knowing this helps us to understand certain Bible passages better. ⁷ For instance, the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, chapter 6, verse 13, **And lead us not into temptation (a time of testing), but deliver us from the evil one.** ⁸

Again, in First Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 13, **No temptation (time of testing) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tested) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (tested), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. What a victorious promise!** ⁹

So, the Bible tells you to test yourself! Second Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 5, **Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?** ¹⁰

What's the test? It's the trials that come into your life!

The Bible tells us there are several types of trials. ¹¹

There are trials caused by you! This is the cause-and-effect test. You reap what you sow. Galatians, chapter 6, verses 7 and 8, **Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.**

You are guilty of infidelity. You get caught. There's separation, divorce and heartache. ¹²

There are trials caused by simply living the Christian life! Your light shines so bright it exposes the sins of others. So you lose your friends and may be shunned.

First Peter, chapter 4, verse 12, **Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.** ¹³
Verse 16 tells us why, **However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.** ¹⁴

Then, **there's the "Why?" trials!** These are the ones that don't seem to have an explanation. "Lord, why me?" "Lord, why this?" There was Job who could have asked that question. He lost everything and was in terrible pain. He was surrounded by a nagging wife and three condemning "friends". He didn't have the knowledge of the first two chapters of the book! All he knew was he was trying to live a righteous life and, suddenly, got zapped! Have you had trials like that?

I can remember our friend several years ago who was in a hospital going through painful labor. Lorraine looked up at us with a faint smile on her face and threatened, "When I get to heaven, I'm going to corner Eve and have a little chat!" ¹⁵

The second question this passage answers is . . .

II. How Do You React What a Trial Comes? -

v2

How do you react when a trial comes? Notice verse 2, **Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds . . .**¹⁶ You react with **pure joy!**

Joy³ means delight! ¹⁷ There's a tremendous testimony that comes when Christians meet adversities with a calm faith.

I am still impressed with my mom's attitude as we buried her husband, Bob. She says she spent the happiest ten years of her life married to him. But she praised the Lord when he was delivered from the awfully painful life of cancer he had in the last few months of his life. She was content with the beautiful memories she had left.

Dana was a beautiful young woman in her thirties. The last few months of her cancer-ridden life were an

³ χαρά.

inspiration. So vibrant in her faith, she longed for the experience of meeting the Lord in all of His glory! ¹⁸

The third question, then, is . . .

III. Why Should We React that Way? - v3-4 & 12

Why should we react that way? Verses 1 through 4 read, . . . **because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything . . .** ¹⁹

Because you are going to profit from it by **developing perseverance**. ²⁰ **Perseverance** ⁴ literally means “remaining behind”. So it is being patient, having endurance, having steadfastness and consistency. ²¹ This is the ability to turn adversity into greatness. ²²

Because **your perseverance will produce maturity**. **Maturity** ⁵ literally means having reached its end. It’s complete or perfect. It’s perfection toward an end. It’s

⁴ ὑπομονή.

⁵ τέλειος.

like the perfect steak! ²³ Trials give you the ability to conquer life! ²⁴

Because **your perseverance will produce completeness.** **Completeness** ⁶ is an entire something. This is the lamb without spot or blemish qualified to become a sacrifice. This is the priest who is qualified to serve in the temple. ²⁵ Trials make you qualified for full service for the Lord! ²⁶

Because **your perseverance will produce you not lacking anything.** **Lacking** ⁷ means failure to reach a goal. This was the technical word for an army surrendering in battle. ²⁷ So, in a godly reaction to trials you will not be surrendering but be reaching the goal God intended for you. ²⁸

The final thought in the message is in verse 12, **Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life** that God has promised to those who

⁶ ὁλόκληρος.

⁷ λείπω.

love him. The reward for standing up to the test is the crown of life! ²⁹

So, how are you going to respond when your next trial occurs? You are going to react with pure joy because you know something Satan doesn't know. ³⁰

Each trial you overcome makes you a winner!

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